

March 9, 2015, Mexicali, Baja California

**From:**

Dr. Carlos B. Graizbord  
Secretary of Environmental Protection, Baja California State

**To:**

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board

**RE: Letter of Support for Salton Sea**

As the Secretary of Environmental Protection for the State of Baja California, the purpose of my letter is to support the Imperial Irrigation District's petition to restore Salton Sea.

As the Board has acknowledged, this is a state and binational issue. This issue is especially important for the residents, businesses, and governments from Imperial Valley, Coachella, and Mexicali, which will be impacted by the State of California's decision change to not restore Salton Sea. The Baja California State Environmental Protection Agency has the responsibility to:

- Guarantee the right of every person to an environment that is appropriate for development, health and wellbeing.
- To use natural resources in a sustainable manner by restoring the ecological balance, preserving the ecosystems, and protecting biodiversity.

For these reasons, sustainability at the binational, regional, urban, and local level is an essential principle which guides us when our states share a common watershed of natural resources.

Also, there are existing compromises under the Border 20/20 Program signed by our federal governments to maintain environmental health on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Therefore, the Salton Sea region's local governments have the responsibility to protect our residents' health and wellbeing. In this case, the lack of restoration of Salton Sea will bring serious negative consequences to our communities caused by the salinity increase and the water level decrease.

In that sense, the decreased water levels, which are a result of the water transfers under the QSA, will expose the sediment of thousands of acres at the lake. Therefore, the exposed area's emissions will worsen in a significant way the air quality and will cause an increase of heart disease, asthma, lung cancer, and other health problems for the residents of Imperial Valley, Coachella, and

Mexicali. The salinity increase in the lake will accelerate dramatically once the temporary mitigation measures ordered by the Board disappear in 2017 - threatening the area's ecosystem.

In addition, it's necessary to point out that in recent years, several studies have confirmed that the restoration is possible and necessary to protect the resident's health and wellbeing and Salton Sea's surrounding communities. The Board should consider that there is a need for all the necessary groups to meet to design, implement, and finance a restoration plan to have a smaller and more sustainable lake, which will preserve a brighter future for the Imperial Valley, Coachella, and Mexicali.

On behalf of the Baja California State Environmental Protection Agency, we join the call to the Board to approve the Imperial Irrigation Districts petition.

The Board, the Imperial Irrigation District, and all other interested parties must participate to ensure the lake's restoration. We respectfully request the Board to convene a collaboration process between parties to identify a specific restoration plan.

The goal for our common watershed is "to use natural resources in a sustainable manner by restoring the ecological balance, preserving the ecosystems, and protecting biodiversity".

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlos B. Graizbord  
Secretary of Environmental Protection, Baja California State